

# Tough Times

Vol. 6 No. 1 / January-February, 2017

## Peel police want YOU

BY AMRIK AHLUWALIA

**I**t was a cold, snowy evening in Peel. A friend of mine was driving home. He was being cautious.. Suddenly, he heard police sirens behind him.

My friend pulled over. The officer got out, walked up to the car and knocked on the window. The officer asked if my friend knew why he was pulled over. "No," he replied – he was quite sure he wasn't speeding. The police officer told him his license plate was covered in snow and couldn't be read. My friend apologized and said he'll clear it off. The officer told him not to worry about it – it was cold outside and he already had a hat and gloves on. The officer cleaned the plate and wished my friend a safe evening as he drove away.

As the Chair of Peel Police Services Board – the civilian oversight of our policing, I love that story because it illustrates what makes the Peel Police Service one of the top police organizations in the country... It's about our people.

The Regional Municipality of Peel Police Services Board is the civilian body governing Peel Regional Police. The Board is responsible for providing adequate and effective police services, law enforcement and crime prevention within the Region.

The Board determines, in consultation with the Chief of Police, objectives

and priorities for the police service. The Board is responsible for the police budget, assesses the performance of the Chief of Police in accordance with the *Police Services Act*, and is the employer for the police service.

This current Board is committed to Peel Regional Police Service continuing to be a leader in its field. The Board has a vision to modernize Police services in Peel.

I would focus on three themes of the Board's vision:

### 1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When I was elected Chair of the Board in early 2016, the Board embarked on a

path to modernize Peel Regional Police to better meet the increasing expectations of the community. One of the ways is through increased community engagement.

The Board has repeatedly said to members of our community: This is YOUR police Board – and we will entertain all comments, positive or not so flattering, to truly understand community issues.

One of the first initiatives championed by the Board was last year's resolution to suspend Street Checks – also referred to as Carding. The Board heard from the community how this practice was affecting black males dis-

proportionately. Following the leadership demonstrated by the Peel Police Board, the provincial government acted quickly and drafted new legislation to replace street checks. I am happy to note that Police Chief Jennifer Evans and the Board worked collaboratively, and Peel Police Service was the first to implement the new regulations – eight months before the target date of January 1, 2017.

### 2. DIVERSITY IN THE POLICE SERVICE

We have a diverse community with a high proportion of visible minorities – more than 60% of our community. Yet only 18% of our police service is from minority groups, while only 19% of our officers are women. This gap in diversity and gender equality is totally unacceptable. We have a problem, and we need to address it now.

The police service hires about 100 new officers annually to meet the growth of the Region and replace officers retiring or going to other occupations. This has happened with the full support of Regional Council, which has allowed the Police Services Board to commit the financial resources to provide the best equipment, best training and the best planning possible.

See "Peel Police...", page 8

## Ahluwalia: 300 not out

Amrik Singh Ahluwalia is chair of Peel Police Services Board. The Ontario government appointed him to the Board in 2011, he was reappointed in 2014, and Board members elected him chair in 2016. He has worked in the oil patch – Shell Canada for 29 years, retiring as general manager. He has organized youth camps, volunteers with Seva Food Bank in Mississauga. He has degrees from Carleton (engineering) and McMaster (business management). An item from student days: He set a record in 1969 for the highest inter-university score – 300 not out. Not out? The game is cricket.



AMRIK AHLUWALIA  
Chair of Peel Police Services Board

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<b>Words from the Street</b>	2
<b>Tough Times</b>	4
<b>The high cost of Law</b>	6/7
<b>White supremacy</b>	5
<b>The homeless riddle</b>	9

# 150 years... and still going strong



## PEEL POVERTY ACTION GROUP

Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) is open to every individual and organization in Peel Region that cares about what poverty does to people. It provides a safe place where people who are cash-poor and those who try to help them are encouraged to speak out – and *Tough Times* is part of that safe place.

The Group's mandate is to advocate for people in need and to educate the public about poverty issues. Membership is free. PPAG meets at 9:30 a.m. the second Thursday of every month (except July and August) alternately in Mississauga at the Newcomer Centre of Peel, 165 Dundas St. W., at Confederation Parkway; in Brampton at the John Howard Society, 134 Main St. N, just south of Church St.

### Early 2017 meetings

Brampton: January 12, March 9, May 11  
Mississauga: Feb. 9, April 13, June 8

[www.ppag.wordpress.com](http://www.ppag.wordpress.com)

## Homeless: The Video

*Spaces and Places: Uncovering Homelessness in the Region of Peel* is a 15-minute video in which homeless people describe their experiences. A team from PPAG, including a once-homeless person, will show the video to a group on request. There is no charge. To book a showing contact [ppagactiongroup@gmail.com](mailto:ppagactiongroup@gmail.com). Allow about 45 minutes for the video and discussion.

The video was made by a team from York University, in cooperation with the Social Planning Council of Peel, financed by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

You can buy *Spaces and Places* on a memory stick for \$50. Email [ppagactiongroup@gmail.com](mailto:ppagactiongroup@gmail.com) or phone 905 826-5041.

## WORDS FROM THE STREET

**T**he people who dine at soup kitchens may not have money, but they are rich in ideas.

Examine this take on Donald Trump while in his president-elect mode: "He's doing the right thing with appointing a billionaire as Secretary of State," said a friendly diner at Knights Table in Brampton.

In the headlines was Rex Tillerson, chairman and chief executive officer of U.S. oil and gas corporation ExxonMobil.

So why is he such a good pick?

"He's a business man who talks with world leaders all the time, doing business for his company. They talk the same language."

We should have Rex over for dinner.



Pumping adrenaline at Whistler Mountain Bike Park – It's the goal (along with architecture) of an injured diner. (Photo by Tourism Whistler/Justa Jeskova)

**A**Knights Table diner is on disability support because he smashed his wrist and injured his back while crashing his motorcycle, thus putting him out of the construction industry's workforce.

He's changing bikes. He plans to invest in a mountain bike and come summer head west to Vancouver to Whistler, the 5,020 ft. mountain that gets more than a million visitors a year, most of whom use its 38-foot annual dump of snow for skiing and other cool sports.

For our young friend, the big attraction is Whistler Mountain Bike Park, which the Whistler website says is "the number one lift-accessed downhill bike park in the world. With 70 expertly-crafted trails spread throughout four distinct mountain zones, we offer the most terrain of any bike park in North America."

Sounds exciting.

Our biker knows his heavy lifting

days in the construction industry are over. So he plans to pedal his way into architecture, the office-based part of the building trade

Good luck, biker.

•••

Then there's the lady who has been a single Mom since she was 18, no help from the boyfriend. Her little girl is 12, needs clothes for school, needs ... just about everything. Mom needs the money to provide it and has a plan.

She's taking a course in mortgage management, helping people who have enough money for the down payment on a house or condo to get to the next step – persuading the banks or other lenders to put up the rest of the cash.

"You are the go-between and you get a cut," she says.

And she's on the road to getting a house of her own.

Good luck, single Mom.

## ToughTimes

**Tough Times is published six times a year**

**Next issue: March-April, 2017**  
**Deadline for ads and editorial: February 1, 2017**

All deadlines are the first day of the preceding month:  
For the May-June, 2017 issue: April 1;  
July-August deadline: June 1;  
Sept.-Oct. deadline: August 1;  
Nov.-Dec. deadline: October 1.

**Phone 905 826-5041**

Volunteer writers, reporters, artists, cartoonists, photographers, are welcome at *Tough Times*.

**Please email letters to:**  
[toughtimestabloid@gmail.com](mailto:toughtimestabloid@gmail.com)

**Produced by:**  
Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG)

**Editor:** Edna Toth

**Associate Editors:**  
Michelle Bilek • Rosemary Keenan

**Graphic Designer:** Patti Moran

**Contributors:**  
Michelle Bilek, Laura Bilyea, Leo Dias, Ryan Gurcharr, Rosemary Keenan, Dr. Paula DeCoito, Dr. Simon Black, Shaila Kibria Carter, Sophia Ramsay, Norma Nicholson, Adaoma Patterson, Bret Sheppard, Sankofa, Edisiri Udoh, Amrik Ahluwalia, Huda Abbas, David Green, Sonia Sidhu MP.

**Printed by:** Atlantic Web Printers

## Advertising Rates

Tough Times distributes 10,000 copies, throughout Peel Region.

Target audience is people experiencing homelessness, using food banks and soup kitchens, people who are struggling, plus faith groups, social service agencies, trades unions, business people, and the general public.

**To advertise in Tough Times:**  
[toughtimestabloid@gmail.com](mailto:toughtimestabloid@gmail.com)

Phone: 905 826-5041  
Mail address: 4 - 287 Glidden Road  
Brampton ON L6W 1H9, Canada

*Advertising rates: (colour included)*

**Business card:** \$90

**1/16 page:** \$100

**1/8 page:** \$155

**1/4 page:** \$240

**1/2 page:** \$430

**3/4 page:** \$600

**Full page:** \$755

*A full page is approximately 10 inches wide by 12 inches deep = 120 square inches. E&OE*

## PARENTS AND COMMUNITY ARE KEY

# School Board plan: Success for Black male students

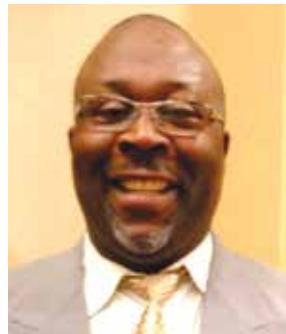
BY DAVID GREEN

In order to address the unique and specialized needs of troubled youth, Peel District School Board took a bold step – initiating an investigation to determine how best to provide service to black male students that will ensure they are on a pathway to success.

Based on the findings of the Board's investigation and in conjunction with the FACES Report by United Way of Peel, the Board has developed a strategy that will include consultation with parents and leaders from the black community.

This is a major step in the right direction; however, from my perspective as a parent, and as executive director of Free For All Foundation – a not-for-profit organization that provides support to black youth in Peel and the GTA – and, as a School Board trustee, for this strategy to work, the framework must include:

- Integrating healthy and wellness physical activity and self-esteem into a comprehensive curriculum;
- Building capacity of staff in youth-serving settings with education promotion strategies and activities;
- Encouraging parent support for families' engagement in educational and physical activity, education in the home environment;
- Involvement of parents who must be on board in a 100% partnership from the get-go;
- Programs must be conducted in safe



School trustee David Green (*Tough Times* photo)

of schools, teachers, youth, parents, families, community volunteers and community agencies.

Further, program components must serve a dual purpose: first, it should involve families, and second, students. Additionally, community outreach services will assist families in identifying and obtaining community resources to support their children at home.

Research shows that when parents are involved in their children's education, children are more likely to earn good grades, attend school more often, have high test scores, behave better, graduate from high school, and attend college.

As leader of an organization that runs programs for disadvantaged and at-risk youth, I know that parents play an integral role in children's education. The education system plays a major role, but the school board is only one part of the solution. Parents must support their children, especially black males, so that their grades align with other students in the school system.

Understandably parents are frustrated when they are not able to spend

community environments, allowing for familiarity, open communication, and trusting relationships with all stakeholders.

The objective is to reduce and eventually close the gap, so that black male achievement programs are designed to serve youth ages six through 12. Programs must be developed with the involvement

time with their children to oversee their homework and extracurricular activities. Often, parent's voice concerns such as: there is no father in the home, I am a single parent, and I have to work two jobs to make ends meet. Children come to school unprepared.

Often the students loitering in the hallway are visible minorities, mostly black males. When asked why they are not in class, the most frequent responses are "The teacher does not like me" or "I don't understand the work" or "The work is too hard."

It is a familiar situation that must be addressed immediately. Some of the options could be a faith-based program; a leadership program; however, students

are also faced with responsibilities that are linked to parents working longer hours outside the home. For example, some students are unable to engage in such programs because they have part-time jobs or they have to go home to take care of siblings.

Parents must be able to take greater interest in their children's education if we are to reduce and eliminate the loitering in hallways and the negative attitude toward teachers and homework.

Parents are the primary educators

of their children.

Responsibility lies with us as parents to provide the community resources to help our children with their development, achievement and educational growth.

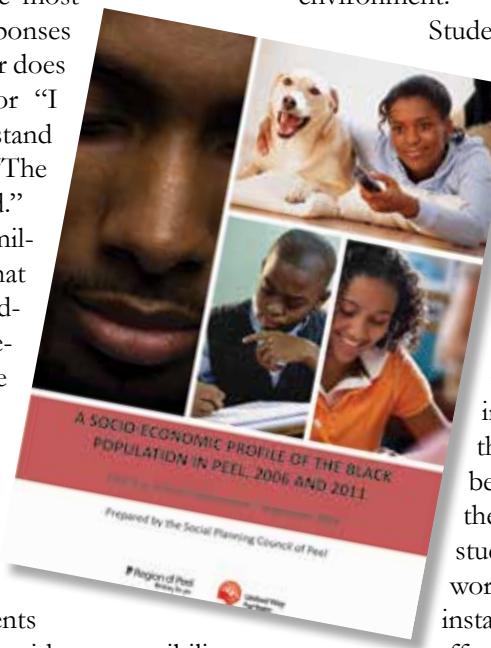
The board and the school system have equal responsibilities to ensure all students are given the tools that they need to succeed, in a caring and friendly environment.

Students feel that they are not respected and are therefore not encouraged to participate in classroom discussions and projects in-class.

Recent research suggests that if black students are to succeed in the school system, then educators must be willing to change their beliefs about black students. Teachers are working very hard in most instances to introduce effective teaching strategies, but usually in terms of reading instruction; research suggests that in order to improve students' reading skills, teachers must teach students to decode and comprehend various styles of texts and information.

Another aspect is the role of government and social agencies. What role can these agencies play? Certainly they can be instrumental in raising awareness on issues facing black male

**See "School Board...", page 8**



## Don't Go Hungry.



Fighting Hunger...Feeding Hope

If you are struggling to make ends meet, have to choose between paying rent or buying food, or have more bills than income... The Mississauga Food Bank is here to help you.

Anyone in need and living in Mississauga can use a neighbourhood food bank or other member agency regardless of age, sexual orientation, race, religion, gender or immigration status.

Visit [www.themississaugafoodbank.org/getfood](http://www.themississaugafoodbank.org/getfood)  
or phone 905.270.5589 to find a member agency near you.



# A New Year of new things to do

It's 2017, time for new directions, embracing things you've never done, and expanding your skills and relationships. Yes, as Mom said: "Try new things and meet new people."

Kids need to have New Year's resolutions, too. They don't have to cost much, except a bit of time and some healthy curiosity. That's where libraries come in.

Here is a list of books that children and their caregivers can use together to learn about foraging in the outdoors right where they live, or using up crafting material "ends" to make new things that are fun, useful or can move!

And as always, drop in to your local branch library to find out what programs are being held for kids and for adults! Most Mississauga Library programs are free. Who knows what you'll learn or who you'll meet?

[www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/childrens-services](http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/childrens-services)

[www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/librarynews](http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/librarynews)

## Let Your Kids Go Wild Outside: Creative Ways to Help Children Discover Nature and Enjoy the Great Outdoors,

by Fiona Bird

In this inspirational book, with ideas for children of all ages, foraging expert Fiona Bird shows the value of playing outside and discovering nature. For those who don't want to be far from home, there's plenty to do such as making a snail holiday village or making seasonal recipes from natural ingredients. This book also teaches children about their environment, including conservation guide-

lines and tips on forecasting the weather.

## Bugs, Bees, and Other Buzzy Creatures: Full of Fun Facts and Activities,

by Margaret Parrish

Learn about the insect world with fun activities and amazing facts. Discover why bees buzz and why ladybugs are red, as you complete fun craft activities. Each page has clear, engaging photos with clear text and step-by-step instructions.

*Let's Get Crafty with Paper & Glue: For Kids Aged 2 and Up;*

## Let's Get Crafty with Salt Dough: 25 Creative and Fun Projects for Kids Aged 2 and Up;

## Let's Get Crafty with Fabric & Felt: For Kids Aged 2 and Up;

Each book in this series by CICO Kids staff has 25 activities all made possible using scraps, and bits-and-bobs that you might have around the house. From paper chains to decorate your child's bedroom, to preparing salt-dough sculptures, to creating a pom-pom bumble bee, these books can teach fine motor skills and inspire your kids to get crafty!

## Decorative Card Crafts,

by Annalees Lim

Cards for special occasions are expensive but the personal touch is always missing. My own kids have been making personalized cards for family and friends for over 15 years! This high-interest crafting guide teaches readers how to create decorative cards for birthdays, Christmas, Diwali, Hanukkah, Valentine's Day, Eid-Ul-Fitr, and more!

## Let's Sew

Learn how to sew with 10 easy projects for kids and beginners. Children will learn the invaluable skill of sewing on a button as well as a running stitch. Easy-to-make projects include birds, badges, and fish bookmarks. Let's Sew is a fun sewing book that teaches practical skills to last a lifetime.

## Make Build Create: Sculpture Projects for Children, by Paula Briggs

Children of all ages are encouraged to explore how they might transform a wide variety of natural and man-made materials through a series of open-ended projects. Inspiration is taken from architecture, landscapes, figures, and objects in the everyday environments around us. These carefully selected activities enable children to learn sculptural techniques such as casting, carving and construction while making personal sculptural artworks.

## Back at work... now what?

The 435 members of Peel Children's Aid Society staff who are members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE 4914) are back at work after a 13-week strike.

Money and most other issues have been settled, but front-line workers and support staff appear to remain fed up with caseloads and more.

So what's next?

Staff and management have agreed to binding arbitration, which means a "disinterested third-party" will listen to their arguments and tell them what must be done.

As Tough Times went to press, no date had been set for arbitration meetings, and management and union were following the rules by not making public statements, except for news releases announcing the end of the strike.

Management said: "We are grateful that our staff can now get back to the important work they do to supporting children, youth and families in our community."

The union said: "Our focus has always been on the children and families of Peel and now we can return to our job of giving the highest level of care possible."

## Excerpts from Peel CAS 2015-16 annual report:

Funding from the province has a 2% cap on increases "which is less than the cost of providing services to our growing population...We continue to advocate with elected officials to highlight the need for more equitable funding in Peel."

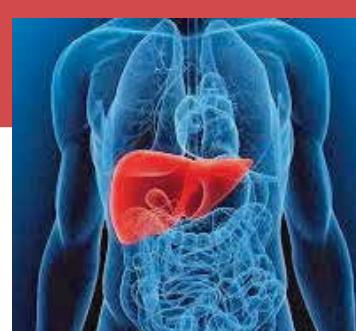
Statistics in the Report: nearly 13,000 calls to Peel CAS; 8,000 investigations; 11,000 families served.

# Hepatitis C

## Treatment, Care & Support Is Available

### You can be at risk if:

- Sharing of personal care and hygiene items such as razors, toothbrushes, clippers and scissors with someone living with hepatitis C
- Sharing needles used for body tattoos and piercings. Re-using and sharing tattoo ink and ink pots
- Sharing drug equipment such as needles, filters, tourniquets, water, syringes, cookers, alcohol swabs, acidifiers
- Receive blood and body organs that have not been screened for hepatitis C. Even in Canada, if you received blood and organ donations before 1990 you may be at risk.
- Involved in medical procedures including immunization in hepatitis C endemic countries



### Contact:

**Bloom Clinic**

**40 Finchgate Blvd. Suite 224**

**Brampton, ON L6T 3J1**

**Phone: 905-451-6959 | mail@bramaleachc.ca**

*Call today for information or  
to book a free test.*



**Bloom Clinic**

## WHITE SUPREMACY/RACISM

# An insidious oppression

BY BROTHER SANKOFA

**W**hen we hear the term – “White Supremacy/Racism” some people may think about injustice, discrimination and prejudice. However, it is much more insidious, calculating and deadly for those of us who have lived under this oppressive global system for the past 2,000 years.

Elder Neeley Fuller, Jr., stated, “If you don’t understand white supremacy, which is racism, what it is and how it works, everything else that you understand will only confuse you.” Every black, brown, red and yellow person in the world must learn the scientific outcomes and control mechanism of “White Supremacy/Racism” in order to eliminate it. European/white people are a minority in the world but control most of planet earth.

Ancestor Dr. Frances Cress Welsing defined White Supremacy/Racism – as “the belief in the superiority of white people leading to the direct or indirect subjugation of all non-whites by white people for the purpose of pleasing and serving any or all white persons, at all times, in all areas of activity, including economics, health, education, entertainment, labour, law, justice, politics, spirituality, religion, crime, war and sex.” White Supremacy/Racism speaks to the global domination by whites from Europe over the different colours of the world.

Afrikan people have been living under White Supremacy/Racism for the last few thousand years. Therefore, I would like to provide the definition of Anti-Black Racism: “It is the practice of prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping that is directed at Afrikan people by persons classified as white with the purpose of replicating their historic systems of slavery and colonialism in an effort to keep Afrikan people worldwide at a subservient level in religion, education, economics, and other important spheres.”

**...under the system of White Supremacy/Racism**

**Afrikan (black) people are at the bottom or close to the bottom of every social indicator that measures success and well-being.”**

In order to understand how White Supremacy/Racism affects the different colors in the world, we will share this nursery rhyme:

*If you’re white, you’re alright,  
If you’re yellow, you’re mellow;  
If you’re brown, stick around,  
But, if you’re black, get back.*

— *Nile Valley Contributions to Civilization*, p. 26.  
Anthony Browder.

Therefore, under the system of White Supremacy/Racism

Racism Afrikan (black) people are at the bottom or close to the bottom of every social indicator that measures success and well-being.

*Brother Sankofa is a Brampton poet, activist and community developer. Email [sankofajuba@yahoo.ca](mailto:sankofajuba@yahoo.ca) Brother Sankofa is writing a series of articles dealing with White Supremacy/Racism and how it specifically affects Afrikan/Black people in all areas of activity: spirituality and religion, education, economics, labour, health, justice, crime, politics, entertainment, war and sex. Watch for instalments.*

### Editor's recommended reading:

*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness.* Author Michelle Alexander traces the development of anti-Black laws, practices, administration, in what is now the United States, since the 1600s. Apparent improvements have been followed by re-assertion of White supremacy, until today, she says, the U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, higher than Russia, China or Iran. More than two million Americans are in jail, most of them people of colour, many on drug charges. With allegations even here in Peel that Blacks are policed differently to Whites, it’s scary stuff.

Mississauga and Brampton Libraries have *The New Jim Crow*. Check it out.



**Basic income** is a payment to individuals or families to make sure that everyone benefits from a **minimum level of income**. The Ontario government is considering a pilot project to test basic income.

We want **YOUR** ideas.

Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee, Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) and the Region of Peel are hosting meetings about Ontario’s Basic Income pilot. All are welcome to attend and provide input.

## Basic Income Pilot

### Mississauga Meeting

Thursday, January 12, 2017  
Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

### Region of Peel

7120 Hurontario Street  
(at Derry)  
2nd Floor, Room 421

### Brampton Meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 2017  
Time: 1:00 p.m. - 3 p.m.

### Knight's Table

4 - 287 Glidden Road

To register by email: [poverty@peelregion.ca](mailto:poverty@peelregion.ca)

Tel: 905-791-7800 EXT 8782

Bus tickets available. Light refreshments will be served.

For more information visit:

[www.ontario.ca/page/basic-income-pilot-consultation](http://www.ontario.ca/page/basic-income-pilot-consultation)

**PEEL POVERTY ACTION GROUP**

Region of Peel  
Working for you

## Getting the goods to Knight's Table

Celebrities and others flock to Knight's Table bearing gifts, goodies and goodwill.

The place is Peel's only 365-days-a-year three-meals-a-day soup kitchen. As a registered charity, it provides tax receipts for cash donations over \$20. It is in constant need of supplies, especially fresh vegetables and the money to buy them. Phone 905 454-8725 for more info.



**Merry music:** Santa hats and peace and goodwill marked a performance by Santa's Singers. (*Knights Table* photo)



**Gifts for the hungry:** Jagmeet Singh MPP for Bramalea-Gore-Malton (centre, blue turban) is joined by supporters including young people to deliver much-needed supplies to Knights Table. The Singh Khalsa Sewa Club, Brampton Gurdwara Committee, and others contributed 2,362 lbs of food and 22 blankets. (*Knights Table* photo)



**What's cooking, Linda?** Brampton Mayor Linda Jeffrey serving food at Knights Table told diners how pleased she was that Peel child care benefitted from her work as an MPP for Brampton Centre and Brampton-Springdale. As a politician she was able to get Brampton and other municipalities in Peel a fairer share of social service funds. (*Tough Times* photo)



Cocoa, cookies and a mug were presented to diners at Knights Table by Zaid Al-Rawni on behalf of Islamic Relief Canada, where he is Chief Executive Officer. (*Photo by Shaila Kibria Carter*)

## NORTH PEEL & DUFFERIN Community Legal Services

- Free legal services for low income residents of Brampton, Caledon and Dufferin County
- Problems with your landlord?
- Is your rent subsidy threatened?
- Was your application for Ontario Disability Support Program benefits denied?
- Problems with Ontario Works?

905-455-0160 Toll Free from Dufferin 1-866-455-0160 npdinfo@lao.on.ca

# The high cost of law

Justice comes at a price. If you need a lawyer, it can cost a fortune. If you don't have a fortune, expect trial and all the tribulations that go with it.

Members of Peel Poverty Action Group recently reported that unless you know your way around the court system, you can't win. One member said

that an unmapped wander through the justice system cost her \$3,000.

But change is on the way, with two projects affecting Peel:

**The National Self-Represented Litigants Project** (NSRLP) is publishing a list of lawyers who will charge you only for the work they do, providing guid-

ance only through the research that you can do for yourself, plus advice on court procedures. The more you can do yourself, the less it costs. It's dubbed "unbundling".

**The Closing the Gap Project** sponsored by MIAG, the Centre for Diverse Women and Families, plans to provide

## CLOSING THE GAP

BY HUDA ABBAS

MIAG Centre for Diverse Women and Families in Mississauga has received a grant of \$74,598 through the Law Foundation of Ontario for a project titled *Closing the Gap: Building Service Providers Legal Capacity to Improve Access to Justice for Immigrants and Refugees*.

In partnership with legal experts, MIAG will train 100-125 individuals who work directly with immigrants and refugees to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and tools to provide basic legal information to aid clients in navigating the legal system.

The project will tackle the legal issues of violence (domestic, sexual, harassment) and child welfare.

Front-line workers and managers, settlement workers, counsellors as well as community and faith leaders will be able to attend a set of five to eight workshops, to be offered twice in Mississauga, twice in Brampton, and once in Caledon.

MIAG asked the Law Foundation of Ontario (LFO) for funding to improve access to justice for immigrants and refugees since the arrival in Canada over the last 12 months of 25,000 refugees.

More than 11,400 Syrian refugees have settled in Ontario, almost half in the GTA. Thus far, over 75% of the refugees Canada has received are women and children.

Mississauga, has the third largest population of Syrian descent after Toronto and Montreal. The impact of such a sudden arrival of refugees has overwhelmed service agencies. Closing the Gap will build the capacity and skills of service providers to respond to clients' basic legal needs.

MIAG has noticed that low-income and isolated people – racialized groups, such as immigrants and refugees – are most likely to seek out, or rely on, in-person support from trusted intermediaries, such as social service workers and community leaders to receive legal information (CLEO, 2013; Cohl & Thomson, 2008).

A 2013 study conducted by Dr. Melina Buckley, titled *Eroding Legal Services: Review of Current Literature*, prepared for Community Legal Education Ontario, also found that people seek traditional legal advice from non-professional sources, rather than formal justice authorities.

To ensure that immigrants and refugees receive equitable legal services, various service providers involved in settlement, healthcare, education, advocacy, and faith and ethno-cultural supports, must be well-informed. Different educational tools will be used in the training.

Project's name: Closing the Gap: Building Service Providers' Legal Capacity to Improve Access to Justice for Immigrants and Refugees

**Funder:** Law Foundation of Ontario  
**Funding stream:** Access to Justice Fund (ATJF)

### MIAG's partners so far:

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO); FCJ Refugee Centre, facilitate workshops; Hispanic Development Council, facilitate workshops; Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO), facilitate workshops; Mississauga Community Legal Services (MCLS), facilitate workshops; India Rainbow Community Services, provide a space for one of Brampton's training rounds; Caledon Community Services, provide space for Caledon's training; Catholic Family Services of Peel, provide a space (in principle).

Huda Abbas is executive director of MIAG: Centre for Diverse Women and Families

## 'Unbundling' may save money

BY EDNA TOTH

**T**he National Self-Represented Litigants Project began about 2012.

Research in Brampton, B.C., Alberta and elsewhere in Ontario involved talks with lawyers and court staff, judges, but especially self-represented litigants – people who present their own cases in court without a legal professional to help them.

Why no lawyer? High costs (something like \$300 an hour for a lawyer) versus low income. Nearly 60% of self-reps had income below \$50,000 a year, and 40% had incomes below \$30,000.

Cash-poor people ran out of their own money, exhausted their entitlement to Legal Aid, yet the outcomes could be huge – 60% of them were involved in family issues, mostly divorce. They could not afford to have a lawyer, though many learned to their cost that they couldn't afford not to have one.

So they represented themselves. How do self-reps feel about the legal system after their case is heard? According to a 147-page Project report ([link below](#)) "almost all the SRL respondents became disillusioned, frustrated, and in some cases overwhelmed by the complexity of their case" and the time involved. Court staff, including judges, shared their load.

Trouble begins as the case begins. Filling in the required forms is tough (lawyers agree) or even finding out which forms to use; some written guides meant to be simple explanations of court procedures are themselves confusing. Mistakes can lead to adjournments, involving more time and stress.

Some self-reps complained about the lawyers they had used earlier. Complaints included: counsel "doing nothing"; counsel not interested in settling the case, counsel making mistakes, not listening, not explaining, not competent.

Court staff are identified as the most helpful to self-reps, but are limited – by rules around providing "legal advice" and by the number of people who seek assistance.



(With permission of NSRLP)

Online info is being promoted in North America as a way to promote justice. Not so, say self-reps. Websites contain broken links, jargon, unexplained legal terms. They provide legal material when what is needed is advice on practical tasks like serving or filing court papers, presentation techniques, a strategy for talking to the other side. In any case, self-reps reported, different websites had conflicting information.

The NSRLP study declared that no matter how complete, comprehensive and user-friendly, on-line resources are insufficient to meet SRL needs for face-to-face orientation, education and other support. Enhanced on-line technologies can be an important component of SRL programming – for example the development of sites developed specifically for SRL's making use of interactive technology – but cannot provide a complete service.

Cash-poor people ran out of their own money, exhausted their entitlement to Legal Aid, yet the outcomes could be huge – 60% of them were involved in family issues, mostly divorce. They could not afford to have a lawyer, though many learned to their cost that they couldn't afford not to have one.

So they represented themselves. How do self-reps feel about the legal system after their case is heard? According to a 147-page Project report ([link below](#)) "almost all the SRL respondents became disillusioned, frustrated, and in some cases overwhelmed by the complexity of their case" and the time involved. Court staff, including judges, shared their load.

Trouble begins as the case begins. Filling in the required forms is tough (lawyers agree) or even finding out which forms to use; some written guides meant to be simple explanations of court procedures are themselves confusing. Mistakes can lead to adjournments, involving more time and stress.

Four Peel lawyers were on the list as Tough Times went to press. Maybe more now.

**Chris Haber** deals with personal injury, family, employment, real estate, wills and estates. Phone 1-289 768-7194. His office is in north-east Mississauga. He also practices in Milton, Oakville, Burlington.

**References:**  
NSRLP Report 2012: <http://representingyourselfcanada.com/database/>

**For lawyers considering "unbundling":** <http://representingyourselfcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/srlreport-final.pdf>



Paul Steckley (photo supplied)



Brian Metson (photo supplied)



Marie Nickle (photo supplied)



## School board...

cont. from page 3

students. All parties must create policies, systems, and environmental interventions, that can motivate individuals to change behaviours and ideas.

The system can also engage families in initiating and maintaining relationships with schools that promote programs to develop their children's skills, so families have an equal playing field in supporting behaviour change in their children.

Finally, government agencies can also be effective in providing financial assistance and funding to support programs that assist in building the skills of youth, such as mentoring programs that are structured and designed to build emotional intelligence, particularly in the context of interpersonal relationships.

These programs can provide opportunities to help with problem-solving, decision-making, and goal-setting. And provide structured activities for youth who might otherwise drift into problem behaviours.

Hopefully the suggested initiatives and programs can help to create opportunities for black male students to connect with various groups, especially black leaders and role models in ways that allow them to discuss complex and common experiences for healing and growth. It will take the village to be the change for our under-achievers.

*David Green is a trustee on Peel District School Board for Wards 1 and 5 in Brampton.*

*We Rise Together and the FACES Report art work are used with permission.*

## Peel Police want YOU... cont. from page 1

To ensure we have a better understanding of the lack of diversity and gender equality within Peel Regional Police, the Board has commissioned a comprehensive independent review of recruitment and promotional policies. This work has commenced and we will report back to the community what the service is doing right and what other steps need to be taken to address this gap.

### I would like to tell you what this audit is NOT:

It is NOT to dilute recruiting standards;

It is also NOT to discriminate against any group.

The objective is to ensure we have a level playing field and a police service where every segment of society is welcomed; where young women and men of every background, colour and social status are treated fairly and have an equal opportunity to be hired and promoted, based on skill and performance. Period.

### 3. NO ONE LEFT BEHIND

Even in such a progressive country as Canada, a segment of the population does not have a voice.

You are all well aware of this segment, whose concerns for far too long have not been heard or addressed adequately. This is not a Peel-specific problem and is pervasive in society.

We have started conversations with organizations like United Way to figure out how best to reach this group of our citizens; how our brothers and sisters and children who have been marginalized can best be reached.

We want to assess how policing affects them, what concerns them and how the police can work differently to address their unique issues.

Stay tuned as we embark on this important journey.

### What can you do to help?

Well, we can't do this alone. This is your community and your police service – so please get involved. We invite you to share in the conversation of how to make Peel police serve you better.

And, finally, apply to work with us. Encourage others to consider Peel Police Service as a career; they will be thankful that you did.

## So you want to join the police

A high school diploma is required, but a university degree is better in the competitive world of policing. You must be of good character, a good driver, and lots, lots more. Peel Police require an Applicant Testing Services (ATS) certificate confirming that you have completed various tests with this third-party organization. The tests cost you money.

**PLUS** Peel Police want to hire "community-minded young individuals" as cadets, learning policing in an "apprentice-ship style program". Check these URLs:

[www.peelpolice.ca/en/jobsopportunities/minimumqualificationscadet.asp](http://www.peelpolice.ca/en/jobsopportunities/minimumqualificationscadet.asp)

and the Peel Police application form at:

[www.peelpolice.ca/en/jobsopportunities/resources/PRP-157E---Application-Form.pdf](http://www.peelpolice.ca/en/jobsopportunities/resources/PRP-157E---Application-Form.pdf)



**unifor**  
Local 1285

*A proud Canadian Union representing over 5,000 workers and over 1,500 retirees.*

*Promoting community spirit is a commitment we take seriously!*

## THE HOMELESSNESS RIDDLE

# They've got jobs, but live in shelters

BY SONIA SIDHU

**O**ctober 19th, 2016 marked my first year as a Member of Parliament for the riding of Brampton South. Over the year, I have seen a side of Brampton that is often indiscernible to the naked eye. When I tell people that I am from Brampton, they talk about the growing industrial corridor on Steeles Avenue, the rising house prices, and gridlock; never do they think that Brampton could have a problem with homelessness.

My riding of Brampton South includes the downtown core of Brampton – quite different from the rest of Brampton; it has the small town charm of the past in the middle of an emerging modern city. The streets are bustling and the people are warm-hearted. Almost everyone has become a familiar face.

But among these familiar faces are people who are homeless.

Visualizing and understanding that homelessness is part of our society is step one in addressing the issue. To grasp what homelessness looks like in Brampton I participated in the United Way of Peel Region's Longest Night. The purpose of this challenge is to spend a night in your car and experience the struggle many homeless residents are facing. The challenge was an eye-opening experience as it showed that homelessness does not always entail living on the streets – it has a different meaning for many residents.

(The next Longest Night in Peel is Friday, February 17, 2017)

I believe every segment of our society must be treated with dignity and respect and be given the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution. For this to happen we must provide adequate support to communities to help homeless people lead the lives they wish to live.

To better understand the issue of homelessness, I hosted a roundtable on housing, where United Way of Peel, Regeneration Outreach, Habitat for Humanity, and the Salvation Army took part.

The roundtable revealed that about 250 individuals are homelessness in Peel in any given week. Although many spend the evening at a homeless shelter or couch surf, over 15% (maybe 45)

sleep outdoors. All participants agreed that resources are lacking, with no youth or women's shelter in Brampton.

Based on information from the roundtable, I toured Brampton's only shelter: The Salvation Army on Wilkinson Road. Then I understood the issue from the perspective of those living in shelters. My visit dispelled my commonly held belief that people living in shelters do not want to work or do not have jobs. During my visit I saw that many men were sleeping during the day because they had worked the night shift. At the shelter I saw a new side of homelessness in which individuals are working but are homeless, a concept that many cannot fathom.

This led me to explore homelessness in Brampton further. First, a ride-along with Peel Paramedics, canvassing hot spots in Brampton South and discussing problems facing the homeless – among them mental health. People with mental illnesses report higher incidences of homelessness, largely because they encounter more barriers to employment and have less community and familial support.

I also rode along with Peel Regional Police, learning about their initiatives to combat homelessness, such as *Operation: Leave the Streets Behind*, aiming to ensure that every homeless or near-homeless veteran gets help in leaving the streets and finding secure housing.

Through first responders, I learned that homelessness is just one piece of the puzzle; with homelessness come issues of mental health, addictions and prostitution, which need to be approached with equal levels of concern.

Here in Brampton many organizations help families and individuals by giving them hope, dignity, and a chance for a new start. Progress is being made to prevent and reduce homelessness, but the challenge is finding solutions that will last.

As a Member of Parliament, my duty is to represent the concerns of my riding to the federal government. My colleagues and I have spoken up about the impact of homelessness on our communities, leading the federal Government to invest an additional \$112 million through the Homelessness



Sonia Sidhu, MP (Photo supplied)

### Partnering Strategy.

I look forward to working with our municipal and provincial partners, local community organizations and residents to continue to address homelessness. Together, we can create a plan for Brampton with actions that will make

a positive difference in the lives of people in vulnerable situations.

*Sonia Sidhu is the Member of Parliament for Brampton South, member of the Health Committee, and Co-Chair of the Diabetes Caucus*

## Know Your Rights @ Work Workshop

- Are You Covered by the Employment Standards Act
- What is Employment Insurance & Do I Qualify?
- Under What Grounds Can I File a Human Rights Case?

For answers to these questions and many more sign up for one of our free in house sessions taking place the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month from 2:00–4:00.

For more information or to book into one of our sessions please call **(905) 696-7444**



EDUCATE • ADVOCATE • VOLUNTEER



**United Way**  
Peel Region

**Labour Community Services of Peel**

989 Derry Road East Suite 403

L5T 2J8

# New Location November 28<sup>th</sup>

Visit us at our new temporary location at  
Bramalea Community Health Centre at **40 Finchgate Blvd Suite 224**.  
Same services. Same hours. Same friendly staff!



**Four Corners**  
Health Centre

A Member of the WellFort Family

40 Finchgate Blvd. Suite 224  
Brampton, Ontario L6T 3J1  
905.677.9599 • mail.fourcorners@wellfort.ca



FourCornersHC



@FourCornersHC



**Free parking available!**

Offering FREE bus transportation for clients from Malton to our temporary location!

## Monday to Friday Transit Schedule

Departure WestWood Mall	Arrival Bestgate Professional Centre
8:00am	8:20am
8:40am	9:00am
9:20am	9:40am
10:15am	10:35am
10:55am	11:15am
11:35am	11:55pm
12:45pm*	1:05pm
1:25pm	1:45pm
2:20pm	2:40pm
3:00pm	3:20pm
3:40pm	4:00pm

Departure Bestgate Professional Centre	Arrival Westwood Mall
8:20am	8:40am
9:00am	9:20am
9:40am	10:00am
10:35am	10:55am
11:15am	11:35am
11:55am	12:15pm
1:05pm	1:25pm
1:45pm	2:05pm
2:40pm	3:00pm
3:20pm	3:40pm
4:00pm	4:20pm

\*Please note, Tuesday transit begins at 12:45pm departing from Westwood Mall. For all other days, full schedule applies.

## Locations

### \*Bestgate Professional Centre

40 Finchgate Blvd., Suite 224, Brampton  
(Temporary location for Four Corners Health Centre)

### \*Westwood Mall (by the Police Station)

7205 Goreway Dr., Mississauga

\*Please ensure you arrive 5 minutes before  
departure time!

SUMMER 2017  
OPENING AT  
WESTWOOD MALL

# Working with landlords – and more

**O**ur Place Peel provides a home for young people ages 16 to 24, who don't have anywhere to go.

But Our Place Peel's 14 beds can't look after all the youth in Peel who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

So the organization is working with landlords and property owners to find more safe places for young people to stay.

In a program funded by the cross-Canada Homelessness Partnering Strategy since 2015, Our Place Peel tries to prevent and reduce homelessness through advocacy and education not only of its young clients, but with people who have rooms to rent.

They stress that support from Our Place Peel does not end once youngsters have a place to live. Young people continue to get help if needed, such as through care packages of food and household items, bus tickets, access to a furniture bank, housing support for a minimum of six months and help from an outreach worker.

Young people are also encouraged to join Our Place Peel Outreach Team's "Youth Night" on the third Thursday of every month, which offers networking, improving skills and having fun.

Many Our Place Peel patrons are homeless for the first time, or lack the life skills to maintain housing, can't pay rent, or are unfairly treated by landlords.

Discrimination is against the law, but young people are not always given a fair chance in the housing market because they are young, often on government assistance and at times recovering from traumatic events that affect their mental health and appearance.

Many youth have little income and obtain basement apartments, rooms on the upper level of a house or a bed in a longterm residential program, cost \$376 to \$500 a month. They struggle to stretch what's left to buy food, clothing, transportation, personal items and means of communication.

Poor health and isolation lead to lack of confidence in seeking housing, thus the need for advocacy from a Housing Program such as that provided by Our Place Peel – and landlords willing to give young folk a chance.

The Housing Program hosted a meeting to provide up-to-date information on the Landlord and Tenant Act, talk about renting in Peel and housing opportunities for homeless youth.

Landlords said many young people are not mature enough to live independently, but housing placements with a support system would make more rooms available and prevent housing breakdown.

That's the support system that Our Place Peel provides.

Landlords prepared to rent to young people should phone Our Place Peel at 647 469-1383. A housing worker will visit your rental unit and find a suitable tenant.

## LET'S TALK ABOUT BASIC INCOME

The Ontario government says it wants to reduce poverty in the province and a way to do this might be to guarantee a basic income. They want advice on how much that income should be, and for whom, and where to run a pilot project. That's where you come in.

Two public meetings are arranged, one in Mississauga, one in Brampton, (see ad on page 5) to hear your ideas.

Should money go to people whose income is below a certain level? What should that level be? Should the same amount of cash go to everyone, whether they work, look for work, or not? Could a basic income replace Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, and other forms of social assistance? Would people become happier, healthier, more able to find work or improve their education? Is Peel the ideal place to run a pilot project on basic income?

The Region has a huge immigrant population. The Ontario government indicates that it wants to run the basic income pilot project in a typical area, assuming that there is one. Are lots of immigrants typical of Ontario? If they are, then Peel should be right up there offering to be first to host the basic income pilot, and obtain for our residents whatever good things accrue. How to dish out the money? Suggestions vary from a negative income tax to issuing cash every two weeks, enabling recipients to signal changes in family structure, such as birth of a baby.

There's lots to talk about. Come and join the chatter. See Page 5.

## File your taxes. Get your benefits.

Filing your income taxes is an easy way to claim the benefits you and your family deserve.

**And there's help.** Call **905-791-7800, ext. 8782** or visit the Canada Revenue Agency website at **cra-arc.gc.ca** to find out about **free** tax preparation services being offered near you.



Free tax Preparation Services are for individuals with incomes up to \$30,000 or families with income up to \$40,000.

**Region of Peel**  
Working for you

## IMPORTANT NEWS FOR OW AND ODSP CLIENTS

Starting January 1, 2017 for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and February 1, 2017 for Ontario Works (OW), child support and CPP Orphan Benefit payments will be fully exempt as income and will no longer be deducted from clients' social assistance payments.

After the exemption comes into effect, these clients should see an increase in the amount of income available to them. Clients should speak to their caseworkers about how this change may affect their assistance.



Visit [peelregion.ca/OW](http://peelregion.ca/OW) for more information.